COLLEGE GIRLS UPHOLD NATION'S BEST TRADITIONS

High Praise Given by Italian Professor Who Lectured in Thirty-five Colleges and Who Heads the Department of Italian Literature and History at Vassar---Criticism Expressed for Primary School System Because of Lack of Essential Knowledge

By WILLIS STEELL.

ISN'T it about time that some one should rise up and tell the real facts about our American girls? Not that they need any defence in the opinion of their sweethearts, fathers or even brothers, although the latter are inclined to be critical by the fireside. The girls themselves have maintained a dignified silence, permitting the sour faces to use up breath decrying the independence of the modern generation, the way they dress, how they dance, their indulgence now and then in a cigarette, their bobbed hair, and, to crown all, their lack of respect, much less of veneration, for an elder generation.

In the complete assurance that such crimes are episodical merely and are committed only in sporadic instances, the young women have shown wisdom by laughing at all the diatribes and leaving their fair fame to be cleared by time. The girls haven't been crushed by the critical avalanche, and even if they were they would rise again.

A visit to the different women's colleges is all that is necessary to convince one that our girls of this generation have not, and will not, lower the standard of womanhood. Vassar, Smith, Bryn Mawr, Wellesley, Mount Holyoke, are filled this year as they have always been since their foundation with young women healthy in body and in brain, serious in their outlook on life, inspired by high ideals, but gay and representative of their own era and not that of Charlotte Bronte or Jane Austen. Manners change, of course, and it is because they do that the critics have been listened to. At the core all's well that ends well with the world of young womanhood.

Difference of the Generations Really Is Only Skin Deep

A variety of little things show that the outer dissimilarity between the present and past generations is only skin deep. If the young women who are either beginning or approaching the end of a college course were really so hopelessly frivolous as some dim seeing persons say, then the books these girls read would be testimony.

From Radcliffe come statistics that are meaningful. What do the "freshies" read? Do they choose the lighter, sillier, more ephemeral stuff of the publishers' presses? By no means.

The record shows that the old authors still attract—Dickens, Thackeray, Scott and Hardy, George Eliot, Victor Hugo, Du Maurier and Mark Twain. In modern literature the taste is sane and the authors cited as having a great following among the college girls are Wells, Edith Wharton, Barrie, Blasco Ibanez, Booth Tarkington, Rose Macauley and Hugh Walpole. This record could be expanded by duplications from other colleges for women. It is a straw that counts.

Vassar girls bicycle from class room to class room, to the tennis courts, athletic field. On the green in front of the beautiful Norman library there are commonly to be seen half a hundred stacked wheels; there are as many near the chapel entrance at the hour of afternoon service, an organ and choral affair, and near the steps of Rockefeller Hall, which is the centre of Vassar social activity. This point is emphasized because silk stockings, low cut waists and rouged lips do not accord with the bicycle.

Truly, if observation may be trusted to afford correct impressions, then this incubator of future wives, mothers, teachers and social leaders is still producing gifted, cultivated, Christian women that were in Matthew Vassar's wonderful vision when he wrote in his diary: "It is in vain to educate woman's power of thought and then limit the operation—education and liberty walk hand in hand."

A male American will surely imbibe this confidence, but he is apt to be prejudiced in favor of his young countrywomen. A cultivated foreigner, familiar with the course of education in his own country, might be a safer judge.

Such an individual is Dr. Bruno Roselli, first Italian exchange professor to visit this country. Arriving here three years ago, he lectured on political and literary subjects in several of our colleges and universities. He returned this year to be at the head of the department of Italian history and literature at Vassar. His opinion of the mental attainments and behavior of American college girls is based on experience of them and, being disinterested, it should be valuable. At once it may be said that Dr. Roselli's opinion is distinctly favorable.

"I am a man, unmarried, not yet very old and prepared by experience of life—if I may say so much without appearing fatuous—for some degree of folly in young persons. Every teacher has experienced what I refer to, and some of them to an embarrassing degree. But I have felt no embarrassment at Vassar, where the young women attend lectures and classes and treat the men at the head of these with utter impersonality. This is my final judgment, and while it may surprise some of my European colleagues of the mental habits of these charming young women.

"There is, as you probably know, an immense background of life and history for every girl born in a certain class abroad, notably in Italy. To really know such an one outside of one's own family is practically impossible. She may appear ingenuous and fathomable; in reality she is mysterious. Between her and a man who is to know her only as a friend there is a wide gulf. She will not cross it, nor as a rule will she wish to. In simple words, she has been taught by precept, example and tradition to camouflage her real self.

"The American girl—and I need not limit myself to Vassar, for I have met them in many colleges on the same pleasant plane—knows nothing about such confusions. She is frank, outspoken and rarely hides what she really thinks. Don't you see how easy it is for a foreigner to misunderstand her?"

"It is the fault of my countrymen," said he, "to be satisfied when they have learned 2,000 or 3,000 English words. To be able to talk colloquially and fulfil their material wants by means of an inadequate vocabulary is not enough. It keeps a barrier between the races that I am eager to pull down.

Italy Learns Great Lesson From the Results of the War

"Italy has at last recognized that the three millions of her people who are in the United States and Canada are permanently lost to her. It took the great war to teach her that these emigrants of hers were no longer Italians but Americans. I think this is as it should be and that it will enter with other things into a better *rapprochement* between the two countries. But these Italian Americans can become still better Americans by getting a deeper hold on the English language.

"Incidentally let me say that it is a grief to me to know that not a single girl of Italian parentage is enrolled as a student at Vassar. I deplore their absence, which isn't due to lack of money, for all our Italians over here are savers of money and they are generally prosperous.

"As there is so large a showing of Italo-Americans it is wisdom of state to recognize the fact and make them even better Americans than they now are. Colleges like Vassar would help powerfully in this rebirth, and I never miss an opportunity to urge my well to do fellow countrymen to send their girls either here or to a similar college. There is no religious objection so far as Vassar is concerned, for many of the undergraduates here are Catholics."

Dr. Roselli feels very earnestly a desire to bring Italy and the United States into a better understanding. It is improving, he thinks, since the war, which ended leaving Italy dissatisfied because she had seen no American contingent fighting on her soil.

"Our hope," he said, "is in the American generation of Italians. The children born here of Italian parentage are Americanizing the family names—although we Italians can't help but resent this—and are making even their old fathers and mothers into good American citizens.

"These children are a product of the public schools, and I can but hope they will go on utilizing the advantages of a wonderful college like Vassar. This for the Italo-American girls will be a long step toward the absorption of real Anglo-Saxon ideals.

"In truth institutions like Vassar, which foster true Americanism, ought to be more widely advantaged of by Italians whose home and heart are here. Until they do take advantage of such institutions and carry on the education along such lines there will always be immigrants in this free land who do not belong to either country—immigrants who have given up Italy but have not yet accepted America."

Interesting as these thoughts are and germane to the general subject, still the main theme of the interview remained the impression made on a cultivated and pedagogic mind by the American girl. Dr. Roselli was brought back to it by a question as to women's colleges in Italy.

"There are none, strictly speaking," said he, "and coeducation where it is found is due chiefly to lack of space. Women in Italy do, as in Florence and Bologna, study alongside of men, but it is as if a sacred sword lay between them. Certain lectures are heard in common because there is really no division of place or of time possible. Nevertheless, the barriers put up by centuries between the sexes have not been taken down.

"Large groups of women who are suffragists and who demand new freedom do not exist in Italy. By education, training and tradition the choice has ever been for a sheltered life for women. This, I must continue to think, will still remain her ideal existence, unless, as I have hinted, American born girls of Italian descent go back in large numbers to their ancestral homes and show by means of their own development what an admirable thing is true freedom for women. Such a leavening of old habits is very possible, but this is the only means likely to bring it about.

"When a college woman in Italy has by her deep and serious study arrived at the honor of a *savante*, she naturally engages herself with social and political problems. Politics has been affected by women in Italy for centuries; it is an accepted field.

"Not so with American girls whose studies have led them so far; their concern, it seems to me, is not politics, although they have the right to vote, but economic questions. The influence they bring into this economic sphere is perhaps more useful.

"Indeed, I find, more and more as I talk with the Vassar girl, an impelling thought which is also compelling in her education, making it take on the vocational aspect. She wishes to do something essentially useful, and her choice of a life work is most frequently based on what she thinks she might do to bring the best things in the world to her and at the same time make her most useful to her generation. These, none will deny, are fine ambitions, howbeit lacking some of the poetry we are apt to look for in young women.

"Vassar draws, as all persons know, from everywhere, even from the remotest foreign countries as well as from all parts of the United States. What their preparation for college has been differs in wide degrees; some of these degrees are surprising, and often they are amusing. For my own part I find really fine preparation in literature which chiefly concerns me, but often the ridiculous side appears in a lack of knowledge of elementary things. For instance, I find that many girls are almost ignorant of geography, to such a degree that I ask myself if the subject is no longer taught in primary schools.

"We talk together of the peace conference, and by inference rather than by questioning I realize that half of my listeners do not know where Geneva is. Is that credible?

"I know, for I have read the excellent educational articles that have been published in THE HERALD, that the public and primary private schools fall under severe criticism. I can say nothing for or against because I do not know them, but I can't miss this opportunity to press the statement that a college aspirant really ought to know where is situated a city so famous as Geneva!

"Set me down, however, as saying most sincerely about the students of Vassar College that they are marvellous material. It is an amazing reflection to make, but one justified by the progress that they are making in a handful of years what has taken a lifetime for women of other and older civilizations.

Girls Sure of Their Ground When They Undertake a Study

"I have lectured in thirty-five of the colleges of this country and have become acquainted with your young men and women students. My amazement at the facile way the American intellect absorbed culture began with my earliest experience, and has been growing ever since. It has reached a climax, I think, in Vassar.

"Some of the conservatism of old Europe still lingering with me prompts me to ask whether we're not going a little too fast?

"I don't answer the question nor do I linger over it, for the young women of this college almost persuade me to doubt if conservatism in education is a blessing.

"Neither the young women who are educating themselves simply for the joy of it nor those who anticipate fitting into a vocation, which, roughly speaking, are the two classes of students we meet here, ever evince the slightest doubt about anything they elect to study. Both classes seem to feel as if by instinct that everything educational will serve them either for purposes of culture or future work. I believe their instinct is more to be trusted than my old world ingrained doubt.

"The American girl is marvellous. How happy I am to be here to direct some of her thoughts in the channel where mine own flow most freely, to advise, now a book, now a play or a spectacle which bears on her course of study, to serve her in what I amazedly must call her vast strides in culture I cannot too enthusiastically say.

"Once I was unhappily quoted as a critic of some of the Vassar ways. A simple remark I made was garbled in the quotation, and, as false things have a way of doing, it spread widely.

"I grasp the opportunity of saying that where her institutions are filled every year, as by personal knowledge I am aware they are, with the finest material coming from every town and city this country, America, may safely dismiss as groundless all fears for her future."

STRIKING OPINIONS ABOUT AMERICAN GIRLS EXPRESSED BY DR. ROSELLI

I am a man, unmarried, and prepared by the experiences of life for some degree of folly in young persons.

It is necessary here in America to make a quite new study of the psychology of women.

My personal interest in these American students is almost infinitely wider in a scholastic sense.

The American girl is frank, outspoken and rarely hides what she really thinks.

Set me down as saying most sincerely about the students of Vassar that they are marvellous material.

Neither the young women who are educating themselves simply for the joy of it nor those who anticipate fitting into a vocation ever evince the slightest doubt about their studies.

I believe their instinct is more to be trusted than my Old World ingrained doubt.

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DR. BRUNO ROSELLI.

Women in Italy do study alongside of men, but it is as if a sacred sword lay between them.

Education for Italo-American girls at Vassar will be a long step toward the absorption of Anglo-Saxon ideals.

I have felt no embarrassment at Vassar, where the young women attend the classes and treat the men at the head of them with utter impersonality.

One must admire their freedom from cant, their simple recognition of the facts of life and their independent judgment of these facts.

Abroad my work in lecture room and lycee represented my labors as teacher in total. . . . Here a more delightful relation exists. . . . I am appealed to as I cross the campus by students who desire an explanation of points in a lecture.

The Italian girl has been taught by precept, example and tradition to camouflage herself. The American girl knows nothing about such confusions.

Basque Women Undisturbed by War

By MRS. BORDEN HARRIMAN.

Special Correspondence to THE NEW YORK HERALD.

BIARRITZ, Oct. 12, 1921.

IN the southern departments of France where the little villages cluster in the shadow of the Pyrenees are to be found some of the grottos of the old Stone Age.

Here forty thousand or more years B. C. men of the Cro-Magnon race made the beginnings of art. On the walls of these caves have been found representations of the animals long since extinct that hunted and were hunted by the men who then made their homes in this region.

It is with a strange feeling of reverence that one approaches these evidences of the artistic spirit of prehistoric man.

Some of these caves are plainly to be seen from the road that winds up the lovely valley of the Ariege. They are high up on the cliffs above the river and must have afforded secure shelter from the savage dangers by which these men were surrounded in that dim dawn of the world's life.

The paintings and sculpture of the rock walls of these caves have been dated by scientists by the evidence of superbeing rock foundations and their immense age is incontrovertible.

In one instance in a remote gallery at the back of a cavern some stalactites were broken away by the explorers, who found that they blocked the entrance to a smaller grotto. Here were two statues in clay of the bison that roamed the European wilds before the rocky curtain to this cavern had been formed, through countless ages, by water dripping from the roof. And here were discovered in the clay the footprints of the men who had modelled the bison; flints that they had dropped and lumps of clay left from the modelling that bore the impress of those long, long dead fingers. These little statues, made by those men who lived over forty thousand years ago are beautifully executed and quite unbroken.

Not far away, on the walls of another cave, there have been discovered paintings of the same remote period of bison and wild horses. These are engraved with a sharp flint on the smooth rock walls, and then colored with paint made of powdered ochre and manganese, mixed with animal fats. The hollow leg bones of reindeer were used as paint pots by the artists, and have been found buried deep in the floors of the caverns.

There are still earlier drawings made before men learned the use of color, and etched into the rock with a sharp stone, representing lions and the giant elk that roamed through the woods of Europe when the artists who thus depicted them were alive.

Buried deep in the cliffs of all these Pyrenean valleys, and only recently brought again to view, this primitive art throws a shaft of light and understanding into those ages when the spirit of man was encompassed by utter savagery. They show in the care with which they were executed and in the gradual development of artistic ability which they record that the sense of beauty and a desire to represent it in line and color were among the first strivings of the awakening soul of man. These are no chance scratchings but painstaking efforts to present nature as it appeared to the primitive beings who made them.

It is evident that there must have been some light with which to see the work done in the deep recesses of these great caves. One can picture the artist working by a crude lamp held near the rock, with the skill that must have required much practice. Only here, deep in the kindly earth, was he safe enough from the myriad dangers that encompassed his frail life to patiently work out on the rock walls the scenes and objects which his eyes perceived in the world around him.

There are some scientists who believe that the inhabitants of southern France are descendants of the so-called Cro-Magnon race, to which the cave artists belong. There are several striking facts which tend to substantiate this idea. In the first place, the heads of the Cro-Magnon people, as proved by the fossil remains of their skulls, are very long and narrow, with a broad face. The only other people known to anthropologists to have the same cranial characteristics are the people who live in this part of the world now.

Another significant fact is that the most primitive language in Europe is that of the Basques, whose country is not far from this region, which was thickly populated by the Cro-Magnon people. This is commented upon by Prof. Henry Osborn in his interesting work on the fossil remains and ancient cave drawings and sculpture of Europe.

If this resemblance of cranial development and the supporting coincidence of a primitive language are to be trusted as evidence, the people of this part of France certainly represent the oldest living race in western Europe, and it is the most striking instance known of a population remaining unchanged through the ages.

To the visitor to-day the buildings in this area seem a symbol of those prehistoric men who thousands upon thousands of years ago dwelt in these same hills and valleys and plied their trades with implements of stone lately discovered in the river drifts. For, in contrast to northern and middle France, the barns and houses of these peasants are all built of stone. The fields are divided from each other by such walls as are those of New York State.

The native peasants are an intelligent and handsome race, with a goodly mixture of Spanish blood in their veins. They are much interested in strangers and more kindly disposed to them than are those in some of the other departments of France. They speak with great affection of their particular "pays," and well they may. It would seem ungrateful not to have appreciation where nature has been so lavish in her gifts. These peasants are hard workers through the summer months that they may live through the long severe winters. Their principal occupation is stock raising, breeding horses, cows and sheep which are sent to the adjacent city to be marketed. Just enough crops are raised on their land to take care of their stock and themselves, their principal food being cereals.

In the yard of an old granite house built in the early eighteenth century father is threshing in true biblical style, while a younger member of the family is near at hand to lend assistance. The old man stands in the middle of a pile of straw about fifteen feet square as two horses which he guides by ropes held in one hand, while plying a whip with the other, go round and round him like a carrousel. The monotony is occasionally broken by the insistence of a lurking foal that the mare in the lead must furnish it refreshment. The son, lest he forget three years spent on the Somme and some months at Salonica, is minus a finger. Madame, wife of the younger man, emerges from the room at the front of the house, with its ancient rafters and heavy worm eaten doors, where she has been preparing "gouter." At once she takes the centre of the stage. She is full of the esprit of the south, which with her dark Castillian eyes render unnecessary her information that her father was born in Spain.

One brother, she said, had been killed in the war, while two others had returned but to go away again. They found that they could make money faster in the cities than in the old home. "It is hard for my mother, but, enfin, one cannot blame them. 'C'est la guerre'; they still suffer and are restless."

So many, many of the women in these villages have never been out of them. The very few that have ventured abroad have usually gone just over the border to Spain. Where all the men of a family have been killed the women are carrying on the farm alone, as that is their only means of subsistence.

The peasants hereabouts will assure you of how conscientiously and consistently they work. Some exclaim: "We are just as industrious as the Germans, and we don't want the eight hour law!" They are also fully aware of the fact that France's riches lie in her agricultural communities, and may eventually navigate their bark accordingly. But they don't know, or are unwilling to acknowledge that while the inhabitants of the industrial centres are heavily taxed those of the farming districts are scarcely taxed at all.

For news of the outside world as of neighboring towns these quaint people depend upon a paper posted conspicuously each day in a village street. One visualizes with what agony of mind those huddling women must have spelled out the news of battles, and those fallen, a few short years ago.

To-day all is peace in these valleys where the shepherds return at night from watching their flocks on the everlasting hillsides and the women weave into their inevitable knitting their dreams of castles in Spain. Or do they yearn beyond the jagged mountain tops into the sunset's glow where lies Andorra?

Although only twenty kilometers away, over a mountain trail, few, if any, from this side have ever ventured in. Notwithstanding, it must be well worth a visit to that little independent republic, with its 7,000 inhabitants.

In 805 A. D. the Andoreans went to the aid of the French when they laid siege to Urgell, and as a reward were granted by Louis le Debonnaire a strip of territory in the Pyrenees lying between France and Spain.

Here, cut off from all the strife and chaos of the outside world, these people have existed for centuries sufficient unto themselves and a menace to none. May some one some day have the initiative to study them and tell us more about them. Perhaps they, too, are of Cro-Magnon descent.

Truth About Lincoln's Deathbed

THE discussion of a doubtful point in the last hours of Abraham Lincoln has occupied columns recently in the newspapers of New York, Washington, Baltimore and Boston. It concerns the actual room in the lodging house where the martyred President was carried from Ford's Theatre in Washington immediately following the shooting. Although the scene had been minutely depicted by historians, whose only purpose was to hold to the simplest fact, doubt was thrown on this particular one when Dr. Charles A. Leale, the young physician called in to the dying bed by a dramatic circumstance, met in the poorhouse on Welfare Island an aged pauper named Thomas Proctor.

In revisualizing the scene of the Emancipator's death Proctor and Dr. Leale, both past 80, remembered that the bed on which he breathed his last was that in Proctor's rented room of the house.

Proctor's statement acquired great weight from the fact that his portrait appeared among those shown to have been present at the deathbed in a picture drawn by a staff artist of *Leslie's Weekly*. That Proctor was present at this historical moment seems to be authenticated fully.

But that the room and bed were his, notwithstanding his statement to this effect, is declared by the Boston *Herald* to be erroneous. This newspaper presents the testimony of a letter written at the time by William Tilton Clark of Boston to his sister Ida.

Clark, who died forty years ago, occupied a room on the main floor of the house opposite Ford's Theatre. It was into this room and on the bed there that the dying President was carried and laid.

Mrs. Maud Wright O'Leary of Wellesley Hills, Mass., is one of the witnesses for the truth of the Clark version. William Tilton Clark of Boston was her mother's brother. The letter which he wrote to his sister was addressed to Miss Ida F. Clark, 7 Warren street, Boston, Mass. It follows:

WASHINGTON, D. C.,
Wednesday, April 19, 1865.

DEAR SISTER IDA:

To-day the funeral of Mr. Lincoln takes place. The streets are being crowded at this early hour (9 A. M.) and the procession will not move for three hours. We are moved back into the old building (cor. 15½ St.), it having been repaired. Ladies are thronging in here now. I have moved my desk close to my window to secure its use for myself and friends.

The past few days have been of intense excitement. Arrests are numerously made of any party heard to utter secesh sentiments. The time has come when people cannot say what they please.

Since the death of our President hundreds daily call at the house to gain admission to my room.

I was engaged nearly all of Sunday with one of *Frank Leslie's* special artists, aiding him in making a correct drawing of the last moments of Mr. Lincoln. As I knew the position of every one present, he succeeded in executing a fine sketch which will appear in their paper the last of this week. He intends, from this same drawing, to have some fine large steel engravings executed. He also took a sketch of nearly every article in my room, which will appear in their paper.

He wished to mention the names of all pictures in the room, particularly the photographs of yourself, Clara and Nannie, but I told him he must not do that, as they were members of my family and I did not wish them to be made public. He also urged me to give him my picture, or at least to allow him to take my sketch, but I could not see that either.

Everybody has a great desire to obtain some memento from my room, so that whoever comes in has to be closely watched for fear they will steal something.

I have a lock of his hair which I have had neatly framed, also a piece of linen with a portion of his brain, the pillow and case upon which he lay when he died and nearly all his wearing apparel, but the latter I intend to send to Robt. Lincoln as soon as the funeral is over, as I consider him the one most justly entitled to them.

The same mattress is on my bed and the same coverlid covers me nightly that covered him while dying.

Enclosed you will find a piece of lace that Mrs. Lincoln wore on her head during the evening and was dropped by her while entering my room to see her dying husband. It is worth keeping for its historical value.

The cap worked by Clara and the cushion by you, you little dreamed would be so historically connected with such an event.

(The letter closes with family matters and the writer signs)

Your affc. brother WILLIE.

There is a postscript which reads:

"Please not give away any of this lace out of our own family."

The Boston *Traveler* of April 28, 1865, printed a letter from a correspondent at Washington which confirms the statement made by Clark that the President died in his bed.

The following facts have been indisputably established, says the Boston *Herald:*

Abraham Lincoln died in a lodging house opposite Ford's Theatre, in a small room on the first floor occupied before and after that night by William T. Clark of Boston.

Thomas Proctor's room was in another part of the house.

Proctor was in the room when Lincoln died, and he is included in the sketch by "Leslie's" artist.